

AOA/AAA Coordinated Programs Examples from the Federal Transit Administration

Prepared by: Community Transportation Association of America

Virginia

Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc. (M.E.O.C.), Big Gap, VA

Enhancing the mobility of rural residents through the combination of multiple funding sources to pay for simultaneous trip service

The Area Agency on Aging provides transportation to the City of Norton and the counties of Lee, Wise, and Scott (1,400 square miles) in southwestern Virginia. A demand-responsive service is provided Monday through Saturday, in addition, M.E.O.C provides a variety of services tailored to the individual requirements of anyone in its service area including elderly persons with special needs may qualify for the One-on-One service.

- Each funding source pays proportionately to its resource consumption
- Operation of multiple vehicles by multiple agencies in duplicative local service areas is eliminated.
- Operation costs lessen as service areas are expanded — fewer areas go un-served due to being “too far out of the way”
- Cooperation among participating human service and public transit agencies serves to ensure that Drivers, Attendants, Dispatchers, Management and Programs Staff at participating agencies have appropriate and adequate training to understand each others role and successfully deal with passenger behaviors
- Trips are coordinated, tracked and billed through Paratransit management software, acquired in 1991 with RTAP funds and the proactive support of Grants Managers at the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Florida

The state of Florida contracts with a Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) in each county who in turn contract with providers or provides services directly. The following are CTC's contracted by AAA:

Coordinating trips through combined rides, technology and multiple funding sources

St. John's County, FL

FTA Northeast Florida Rural Transit Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)

FTA along with the Joint Program Office, US DOT funded a four county (Flager, Marion, Putnam, St. Johns) ITS demonstration in northeast Florida.

St. Johns Council on Aging stood out as a significant recipient in the investment. At St. Johns, the ITS technology has shown the potential and benefits of making improvements in productivity, service enhancements, and service coordination and integration. Through this demonstration of the ITS technology, the organization:

- Reduced full time office staff from nine full time equivalents (FTEs) to 4.5 FTEs
- Serviced twice as many requests for trips (150 daily to 300) while decreasing staff from four to two
- Achieved staff reductions that equate to almost \$60,000 a year in savings
- Reduced scheduling time from 4-8 hours to almost 2 while scheduling more trips
- Added fixed/deviation route that serves general public with over 7000 trips per month (funded by county board [due in part to increased productivity and efficiency], 5311 grant, Florida DOT)
- Coordinates regional work trips with Jacksonville Transit Authority (funding from FTA's Job Access grant)

Prior to FTA's investment in the ITS demonstration project, this organization was in jeopardy of losing local funding support. Once the ITS project demonstrated reductions in costs and improved productivity, the local

jurisdictions gained confidence in its ability to provide consistently reliable service. The county board rewarded St. Johns with additional support funding. St. Johns Council on Aging was selected as Florida's Rural Community, Transportation Coordinator of the Year, 2001. According to St. Johns' director of operations, Brian Nourse, "without this technology none of this would have been possible."

With a fleet of 38 vehicles, the St. John's Council on Aging provides fixed route service and Paratransit (186,000 trips annually) for senior citizens and Medicaid recipients countywide.

Seniors ride to senior centers for lunch, education, and recreation programs. In addition they have the option of going shopping on way home from senior center. Cost per trip: \$2.62 OAA and .89 local matches. In 2001, the program had 27,967 rides Total annual senior transportation budget: \$348,000 OAA; \$517,000 with local match.

Contact: St. Johns Council on Aging - Cathy Brown 904-823-4810. Email: ckbrown@aug.com

Bay County, FL Coordinated Transportation Program

In 1998, the Bay Council on Aging expanded to include a fixed route, for a small urban area of 158,000. With the aid of the FTA, the Council purchased trolleys for this service. Agencies that utilize this program include: Mental Health, Council on Aging, Medicaid, Developmentally Disabled, Nursing Homes, door to door service.

The program averages: 800-100 trips a day and 4000 trips per year. Trip cost averages \$7.50/trip.

Contact: Bay Council on Aging - Beth Couliette at 850-769-3468. Email: bccoa@juno.com

Baker County – MacClenny, FL Wages Program

Since 1999, the Baker Council on Aging has used Department of Transportation funded vehicles for its Wages program. This program works in conjunction with the Human Services department providing service to seniors, Medicaid recipients, ADA recipients and the general public all for non-emergency medical trips.

The program costs the AOA mileage for the rides averaging: \$3,700.50. a year at \$1.50 per mile. Cost savings has allowed the Baker Council on Aging to expand to a fixed route seven days a week in 2003.

Contact: Baker Council on Aging - Pansy Ruise at 904-259-2223. Email: bakercoa@nefcom.net

Indiana Community Transportation Area IV Agency on Aging, Lafayette, IN Community Action Program

Coordinating medical trips through volunteers and combined rides and local levels of coordination

Through a partnership with six Town Councils, volunteers provide affordable, cost effective, public transportation to persons living in Boswell, Brookston, Clarks Hill, Hillsboro, Rossville, Waveland and immediate surrounding areas. However, these service, its operations, drivers, dispatchers are all through volunteer efforts. The Board of Directors work to raise funds through donations to cover the cost of the two administrator salaries associated with the program.

5311 pays for maintenance, insurance, marketing and salaries, the town councils pay for gas (donations), and provide volunteer drivers. In 2001, the program made 13,901 trips, and served 1100 residents. The coordination made service available that wouldn't normally be available.

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HOPE Transit Program

In 1996, Area IV formed another partnership to provide the Benton County "HOPE" Transit Program. A countywide program using volunteers to help elderly/handicapped persons get to needed medical appointments. Volunteers use a single lift van or their own vehicles to provide service. In 2001, the program made 671 senior trips and 75 disabled trips. 170 were completed by volunteers at a cost of \$26,950, use of volunteers saved the program \$8,041.

Savings and multi loading passengers has allowed Benton county to expand service to grocery stores, pharmacies and other non-medical requests at off peak times, depending on booking and flexibility. Funding is provided through Title III dollars.

Contact: Area IV in Indiana, Agency on Aging and Cap Agency 765.447-7683, Director Sharon Wood.

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Portland, Maine

Southern Maine Area Agency on Aging (SMAAA)

Coordinating senior trips through community transportation.

In 1997, the Southern Main Area Agency on Aging developed a senior transit program the Independent Transportation Network (ITN) is a model senior transit program created jointly by the Southern Maine Area Agency on Aging (SMAAA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). In 1997, the Federal Transit Administration funded the ITN as a national model for economically sustainable, community based senior transit. ITN uses automobiles and both paid and volunteer drivers to provide service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The goal of the project was to create a community-based mobility solution, suitable for replication, that could be sustained by user fares and voluntary community support. Such a service would be an invaluable support for seniors who must transition from the private automobile to alternative transportation.

The ITN has now delivered over 120,000 rides. Since June 2001, the ITN has operated entirely on fares and voluntary community support, effectively using FTA funds and the cooperation of an established Agency on Aging to reduce public trip cost to \$0. The cost per ride for seniors using the service is less than a taxi. ITN's innovative payment plans include **Gift Certificates** from adult children, **CarTrade** (in which seniors use their old vehicles to fund their transportation,) **membership dues**, co-payments from area businesses and health care providers (**Ride & Shop** and **Healthy Miles**,) **donated automobiles** and **volunteer credits** stored for future use in the system.

ITN's business model and dispatching protocol, which creates shared rides in automobiles among community-dwelling seniors, is captured in an ITS software application that allows communities across the country to easily replicate this innovative senior transit solution. Replications are now being planned in New York, Virginia and Maryland. The long-term goal of the project is a nationally affiliated non-profit, senior transit service. Internet deployment, policies that encourage the use of private resources for personal transit, and development of the affiliated model for ITNAmerica™ are the next stage of development.